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UNCLAS AMMAN 002652

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE PASS USAID FOR MSCOVILL
STATE PASS USTR FOR NED SAUMS
USDOC FOR 4520/ITA/MAC/ONB/PTANOS
TREASURY FOR PIPATHANAGUL
STATE FOR OES/PCI SHIPPE, OES/ENV VALOIS, NEA/RA LAWSON,
NEA/ARN BELL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [JO](#) [PREL](#) [SENV](#)

SUBJECT: JORDAN--FTA ENVIRONMENT COMMITMENTS

1. (U) This is an action cable; see para 5.

2. (SBU) Jordan has made some progress in strengthening its environmental regulatory structure since signing the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the U.S. in October 2000. Specifically, seven new environmental by-laws, drafted by the General Corporation for Environmental Protection (GCEP), have been brought into effect. The seven by-laws currently in force relate to:

- the organization and management of GCEP;
- the protection of coastal zones and marine waters;
- the control of ozone-depleting substances;
- the GCEP funding mechanism to combat hazardous and harmful waste;
- noise pollution;
- financial and administrative oversight for projects funded by GCEP; and
- Environment Protection Fund responsibilities.

Another 13 by-laws remain "in progress," according to our contacts at GCEP. Those by-laws in that pipeline cover such issues as solid waste management, air quality, greenhouse emissions, pesticide use, and national parks management.

3. (SBU) At the same time, an initial flurry of activity and discussion surrounding the creation of a stand-alone environment ministry or cabinet-level entity entrusted with environmental enforcement has noticeably ebbed. A new environment law, of which a new environment regulatory body is a part, continues to rest with the cabinet "under review," almost one year from its drafting. Even the Minister for Municipalities, Rural Affairs, and the Environment Tbeishat expressed his hope to the NEA Regional Environment Officer on May 21 that the law would be passed "soon," although he conceded that there is little outward sign of movement.

4. (SBU) Jordan has also yet to name its participants in the Joint Forum on Environmental Technical Cooperation, stipulated by the "Joint Statement on Environmental Technical Cooperation" issued when the FTA was signed in October 2000. This body should meet prior to the first FTA Joint Commission, which should be held within one year of the FTA's entry into force. The joint statement also calls for an assessment of Jordan's current environmental management capacity to be undertaken and its findings presented to the first meeting of the Joint Forum. If the GOJ were to formally request assistance, USAID is prepared to fund this assessment, using a 2000 FTA-related environmental review it conducted on Jordan's environmental institutional and legislative framework as a foundation study.

5. (SBU) Action request: Post is keen to advance our bilateral trade agenda and is prepared to assist in encouraging the Jordanians to enhance its environmental regulatory framework. We believe that the most effective way to jumpstart a process would be for an appropriate Washington official (perhaps in USTR) to send a letter to a Jordanian counterpart (such as the Minister of Industry and Trade and/or the Minister of State for Economic Affairs), noting our readiness to follow through on the joint statement commitments to form an environmental forum and to conduct an environmental management capacity assessment survey. Such a letter could suggest a timetable and would then serve as a basis for a potential Jordanian request for USAID assistance in conducting the survey. Alternatively, we would be pleased to deliver this or a similar message directly, as instructed by Washington.

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